

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected. Claim 1 is herein amended. No new matter is presented.

Applicants' Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Okada (WO00/15354, as evidenced by U.S. Patent No. 6,500,291).

It is the position of the Office Action that Okada discloses the embodiment as claimed. Okada is directed at a device and method for lamination. Okada discloses a film feed part 2 having a laminate film 1 made up of base film *m*, resist layer *e* and cover film *f*. The laminate film 1 passes through inter-substrate processing part 3, where resist layer *e* and cover film *f* are cut as in Figure 3. Then, the laminate film 1 is transported through a series of rollers until it reaches peeling guide 5. At this point, the cover film *f* is removed, leaving only the base film *m* and resist layer *e*. See, for example, Figure 4. Then, the remaining parts of the laminate film are fed to the rollers 9 and 10, which press the cut resist layer *e* onto substrate *k*. See, for example, Figure 5.

On the other hand, as illustrated in Figure 1, the claimed embodiments require a support roller 12 which feeds a strip material A to a pre-cut device 13. This pre-cut device scores the film of the strip material A. Then, the strip material A is fed to peel plate 26 where the dicing tape T is peeled from the remainder of the film. Furthermore, a press roller 27 located at the

downstream side of the peel plate to stick the dicing tape T on the semiconductor wafer W and the ring frame RF. See Figure 3.

In response to the pending rejection, Applicants herein amend the claim to clarify that a peeling plate is used, along with a roller at the downstream end of this peeling plate. Applicants respectfully submit that Okada does not disclose or suggest either of these elements. In Okada, the peeling guide 5 is a roller, not a plate. Additionally, the rollers 9 and 10 are spaced far from the peeling guide 5. Therefore, Applicants respectfully that Okada cannot anticipate the embodiments as claimed. Additionally, Applicants herein amend claim 1 in order to improve its clarity and form. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that it is improper to interpret the words following “means for...” in the claims as an intended use, as stated in paragraph seven of the Office Action. The citation to MPEP 2114 is noted, but in view of the invocation of 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner review MPEP 2181-2186. Since a mean-plus-function element is defined by its function, it is improper to simply ignore such a function as an “intended use.” Thus, the words following “means for...” must be given patentable weight.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 distinguishes over Okada. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants' Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada further in view of Murphy (U.S. Patent No. 5,730,816).

It is the position of the Office Action that Okada discloses the embodiment as claimed, with the exception of teaching the first and second sensors for detecting a raised portion and lowered portion of the dancer roller. The Office Action relies on Murphy to provide this teaching.

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 2 is patentable at least due to its dependency on claim 1, which Applicants submit it patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

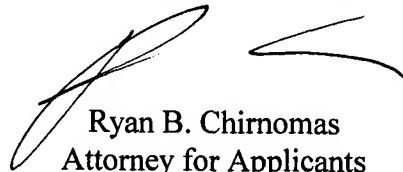
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If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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